

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 SAJ-01

EB-07 COME-00 TRSE-00 OMB-01 /068 W

----- 115566

R 241555Z FEB76

FM AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7643

INFO AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY OSLO

USMISSION NATO

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: MARR, MASS, PFOR, NL

SUBJECT: F-16: PRESS CONFERENCE OF DAVID LEWIS, CHAIRMAN OF
THE BOARD OF GENERAL DYNAMICS

REF: (A) THE HAGUE 0795, (B) THE HAGUE 0951

1. DAVID LEWIS, GENERAL DYNAMICS (GD) CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD, GAVE PRESS CONFERENCE IN THE HAGUE FEB 23 DEALING WITH F-16 PROGRAM. LEWIS SAID F-16 HAD FULL SUPPORT OF USG, THAT CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS WERE ON SCHEDULE, AND THAT NETHERLANDS WOULD REAP ITS FAIR SHARE OF BENEFITS FROM CO-PRODUCTION PROGRAM.

2. LEWIS VEHEMENTLY DENIED ALLEGATIONS THAT GD PAID BRIBES TO INFLUENCE SELECTION OF F-16 BY GON (REF A). HE READ TELEGRAM FROM ERNST HAUSER TO GD LEGAL COUNSEL STATING THAT HAUSER HAD NO FIRSTHAND KNOWLEDGE OF BRIBERY PAYMENTS TO DUTCH OFFICIALS IN THE NETHERLANDS. THIS APPARENTLY WAS IN RESPONSE TO GD THREAT OF SUIT AGAINST HAUSER.

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3. LEWIS ALSO DEALT WITH QUESTION OF AMOUNT OF DUTCH

EMPLOYMENT TO BE DERIVED FROM F-16 PROGRAM AND QUESTION OF FOKKER'S TRANSFERRING WORK TO VFW IN GERMANY (REF B). HE EXPLAINED THAT AT PRESENT THERE IS NO REASON TO EXPECT AMOUNT OF EMPLOYMENT TO BE LESS THAN INITIALLY ENVISAGED, ALTHOUGH HE ADDED THAT US COMMITMENT STATED IN DOLLARS AND NOT IN LABOR MAN-YEARS. THEREFORE AMOUNT OF EMPLOYMENT IS DEPENDENT ON COSTS OF DUTCH PRODUCTION. WITH REGARD TO TRANSFERRING WORK TO VFW IN GERMANY, LEWIS HAD NO OBJECTIONS PROVIDED QUALITY AND COST STANDARDS ARE MET. HE HELD THIS IS A DUTCH DECISION TO BE MADE BY FOKKER AND GON.

3. COMMENT: LEWIS' INTENT IN GIVING PRESS CONFERRNCE WAS TO DISPEL DUTCH MISGIVINGS ABOUT F-16 PROGRAM. WIDE COVERAGE OF CONFERENCE IN LOCAL PRESS, INCLUDING TV COVERAGE OF HIS DENIAL OF BRIBERY ALLEGATIONS, WILL HELP ACHIEVE THIS GOAL. NEVERTHELESS, IN THIS TIME OF HIGH DUTCH UNEMPLOYMENT IT IS LIKELY THERE WILL REMAIN LINGERING DOUBTS WHETHER NETHERLANDS RECEIVING ITS FAIR SHARE. CONTRARY TO LEWIS' STATEMENT, WE UNDERSTAND THAT TRANSFER OF WORK TO VFW IN GERMANY WOULD REQUIRE APPROVAL BY FULL STEERING COMMITTEE. WE WOULD APPRECIATE GUIDANCE ON THIS POINT.

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*** Current Handling Restrictions *** n/a

*** Current Classification *** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: ALLEGATIONS, BRIBERY, CONTRACTS, FIGHTER AIRCRAFT, JOINT VENTURES, PRESS CONFERENCES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 24 FEB 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GolinoFR
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976THEHA00992
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: n/a
Errors: n/a
Film Number: D760070-0280
From: THE HAGUE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760297/aaaagecl.tel
Line Count: 87
Locator: TEXT ON MICROFILM, TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 THE HAGUE 795, 76 THE HAGUE 951
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GolinoFR
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 30 MAR 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <30 MAR 2004 by ElyME>; APPROVED <31 MAR 2004 by GolinoFR>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: <DBA CORRECTED> gwr 970919
Subject: F-16: PRESS CONFERENCE OF DAVID LEWIS, CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD OF GENERAL DYNAMICS
TAGS: MARR, MASS, PFOR, NL, US, GENERAL DYNAMICS, PFOR, (LEWIS, DAVID)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006